

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:  
accepting the piece of data;  
determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;  
and  
replacing a portion of the piece of data with an indicating piece of data.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the piece of data is an electronic mail (e-mail) communication.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on a scheduled interval.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on an ad-hoc basis.
5. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:

accepting the piece of data;  
determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;  
and  
replacing a portion of the piece of data with an indicating piece of data.

6. A method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:  
accepting the piece of data;  
determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;  
and  
deleting the piece of data.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the piece of data is an electronic mail (e-mail) communication.
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on a scheduled interval.
9. The method of claim 6 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on an ad-hoc basis.

10. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:  
accepting the piece of data;  
determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;  
and  
deleting the piece of data.
11. A method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:  
accepting the piece of data;  
determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;  
and  
replacing a portion of the piece of data with a refreshed copy of the portion of the piece of data.
12. The method of claim 11 wherein the piece of data is an electronic mail (e-mail) communication.
13. The method of claim 11 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on a scheduled interval.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the determining and replacing are performed on an ad-hoc basis.
15. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for updating a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising:
  - accepting the piece of data;
  - determining whether the piece of data is subject to the persisted policy scheme;
  - and
  - replacing a portion of the piece of data with a refreshed copy of the portion of the piece of data.
16. A method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to replace a portion of the piece of data with an indicating piece of data.
17. The method of claim 16 further comprising defining an interval for the updating process to be performed.
18. The method of claim 16 further comprising defining the updating process to be performed on an ad-hoc basis.

19. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to replace a portion of the piece of data with an indicating piece of data.
20. A method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to delete the piece of data.
21. The method of claim 20 further comprising defining an interval for the updating process to be performed.
22. The method of claim 20 further comprising defining the updating process to be performed on an ad-hoc basis.
23. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to delete the piece of data.

24. A method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to replace a portion of the piece of data with a refreshed copy of the portion of the piece of data.
25. The method of claim 24 further comprising defining an interval for the updating process to be performed.
26. The method of claim 24 further comprising defining the updating process to be performed on an ad-hoc basis.
27. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for specifying an updating process for a piece of data, wherein the updating relies on the existence of a persisted policy scheme, the method comprising configuring the updating process to replace a portion of the piece of data with a refreshed copy of the portion of the piece of data.